

Amusement News and Stage Chat for Playgoer

After Studying for Law, Young 'Oc' Hammerstein Turned to the Theater

Briggs Shows What He Saw at "Angel Face"

Behind-Scene Secrets of Staging "Aphrodite" Here and Now Revealed

There is another Oscar Hammerstein on Broadway, but this one isn't planning to rival the Metropolitan with counter operatic productions. He hasn't rolled cigars for a living, doesn't wear the same kind of silk hat that his famous grandfather did, has not yet discovered a Mary Garden, nor has he written the music of an opera in twenty-four hours to win a bet. But he is only twenty-four years old, and since he has held off for that length of time, it is safe to say that he will never lift shade-grown Sumatra wrappings with Havana leaf, but he is a Hammerstein, and there are other possibilities.

Columbia's campus has known him as "Oc" since 1912, when he put on the freshman cap, stripped off gaudy-colored ties, and turned down the cuffs of his trousers. The program of the Central Theater, where his musical comedy, "Always You," is filling the first row with tired business men and women who are not so tired, calls him Oscar Hammerstein 2d. But the jump from Blue and White variety shows to theater has not lessened his modesty, and he still prefers to be called "Oc."

"Oc" once thought he was going to be a lawyer. He told about a few evenings ago between acts, blushing. Whether he considered that he had profaned the bar by turning from it to the theater, or whether he feared that his confession would prejudice the people of the stage against him, he did not explain.

"I was within one year of completing my course for the law degree at Columbia," he apologized.

Young Hammerstein is not yet hardened to interviews, and unlike the majority of playwrights he does not advance theories of the drama for the purpose, mainly, of avoiding direct answers. He is exceedingly modest and is frankly stumped when confronted by a newspaper man. Not that he does not know how to talk, for his friends seem to have no difficulty with him in this respect, but he seems almost lost when he realizes that what he says may be printed. Of course this is not intractable, and if he lived up to the best Hammerstein tradition he should soon overcome it.

"Oc" tried hard to keep away from the theater.

For three years at Columbia I felt no leaning toward the stage at all. Then in 1915 the Players' Club on Morningside Heights started rehearsing "On Your Way," and was one of the bunch in the gym when they picked the cast. I was chosen and my first connection with the theater was formed. The next year I was in "The Peace Pirates," still as an actor. In 1917 I collaborated with Axelrod in writing the book and lyrics of "Home, James," and when it was decided to put on a play in 1918, despite the war, I wrote "Ten for the O'Clock."

Oscar 2d, who is the son of the late William Hammerstein, coached both the 1917 and 1918 shows at Columbia and is now the chairman of the play committee of the Columbia University "Players' Club." He cannot explain definitely what led him to withdraw from law school in 1917, but attributes it largely to his association with dramatics at the university. He believes that heredity helped to influence his choice.

"When I went to my uncle Arthur and told him that I wanted to give up

law for the theater, he did not attempt to discourage me, but told me that if I planned to write for the stage I should not attempt to seek instruction in books but that I should come into his office, mix behind the scenes with the stagehands and watch them work; help stage managers, and listen to directors at rehearsals; hold script; travel with road companies, in short, to crowd in as much practical knowledge of the theater as possible before attempting to write.

"I did not hesitate to accept the advice and in two and a half years I was successfully assistant stage manager of 'You're in Love,' and stage manager of 'Sometime' and 'Tumble In.' In conjunction with this I took the full course that was outlined by my uncle and I am still learning."

Although Hammerstein did not outline his theory of musical comedy, his friends say that he has one. It is very simple, if they are properly informed and explain it correctly. "Oc," they say, considers the average musical comedy audience as rather low in intelligence, and that if you give them enough stuff, well served, even though it may be old, they will find enjoyment in it. It is to be hoped that this is not true and that he does not hold himself above the hot polloi as a super-humorist whose merriest shots would be wasted if offered to them.

Hammerstein is tall and slender, of dark complexion and eyes. He admitted he was married.

"Is there an Oscar 3d?"

"No; but there is a William 2d," he replied, and he is just learning to walk. He hasn't said anything about the theater yet. But he may, for I am almost convinced now that it is too strongly entrenched in the family to be eradicated. My younger brother, Reginald, tried his hand at everything to keep away from the stage, but he has just joined the staff of a motion picture producer, so there you are."

S. B. F.

Playwrights persist in showing us that there are men and reporters, and when one heretic among them deviates from this theory, critics, surprised, rub their eyes and Mr. Playgoer, turning to Mrs. Playgoer, says:

"There must be some mistake. He's not a reporter; he's just like other men."

That is what they are saying at the Cohan and Harris Theater, where William Harrigan, in his first appearance since his return from France, where he served as a captain with the 77th Division, is nightly outdoing Sherlock Holmes as a detector of crime. Recklessly he tracks down the murderer who, acquitted, comes home in the first act of Rita Weiman's unusual melodrama, "The Acquittal."

Will was swabbing the make-up off his face with one hand and reaching for his dress clothes with the other when I came in to offer him a job on a paper. He laughed and said that since he hoped to settle down again in a New York dressing room for the first time in five years, he was not in a position to accept his cues from the city editor.

"You know," Ned Harrigan's son said, "almost the first question I am asked about my acting in 'The Acquittal' is how, without ever having been on a newspaper, I realize that certain characters are developed in every occupation and my friends in the newspaper business have enabled me to pick them up."

"I say to myself that I am Joe Conway, a man who is working on 'The Chronicle,' but who could work in a bank, in a factory, or anywhere else. Of course, I realize that certain characters are developed in every occupation and my friends in the newspaper business have enabled me to pick them up."

Conway's success in uncovering the guilty man recalls the days of the police reporter who was a better detective than any on the police force. When a crime was committed, the sleuths trailed the newspaper man to pick up clues he uncovered; now the opposite is often true. Throughout the play Conway credits his training in his astuteness. He is not satisfied when the other reporters leave the Winthrop home, but slips behind portieres into clothes closets and other-wise eludes members of the household to get the story, and he gets it.

"Out on the Pacific Coast they roll their own," he says, jocularly, refusing an offer of assistance.

But Harrigan and Miss Weiman are at variance. He would not advise any person who plans to break into the "game" through the school of journalism route to travel 3,000 miles to the Coast for graduate training.

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Oscar Hammerstein 2d

Many Italians Worship At Laurette Taylor's "Night in Rome" Shrine

Laurette Taylor's daily mail is filled with fervent and extravagantly phrased letters from enthusiastic Italians who have been impressed with her performance of the fascinating pseudo-Italian lady in "One Night in Rome" and who, with characteristic Latin fervor, must give expression to their feelings without restraint.

"Some of the letters from the men," said she the other night, "read suspiciously like love epistles, but I know enough of the Italian temperament to realize that they are not meant for that. I had dinner with a party of



Leo Ditrichstein

friends the other night and among the guests was a particularly volatile Italian gentleman whose English was not quite perfect and who somewhat embarrassed me by repeating over and over again, in the hearing of my friends, the phrase, 'You are most dear to me.' What he really meant, I finally discovered, was that he greatly enjoyed my performance, and not that I was his particular dear or anything

like that. It was disconcerting, however, for a little while."

On New Year's Eve, after the play, Miss Taylor was entertaining a little group of friends in the tiny reception room opening off her dressing room at the Criterion, preparatory to going out with them to supper. She was sitting on a chaise longue, still in her make-up, when the door burst open and a poorly dressed Italian girl rushed in and dropped to the floor. She fell upon the actress' knees and sobbed passionately.

"You are so like my Duse," she cried, "so like my Duse that you bring me back to my dear Italy."

It was many minutes before Miss Taylor could sufficiently calm the young woman to permit her to leave. Throughout the becoming process her guests—there were six in all—sat open-eyed with amazement. When the girl had been sent away with an order for two seats for another performance and an autographed photograph under her arm, one of the women in the party found voice.

"My goodness!" said she, with a little gasp, "I don't wonder you like being an actress if you get little personal ovations like that every once in a while. It must be glorious."

Miss Taylor smiled wearily.

"Of course, we don't," she replied. "A thing like that happens once in a lifetime, not every once in a while. If it was a regular thing there would be no standing us at all. We'd develop such a what the psychologists call it?—such a Jehovah complex that we would become impossible."

Brooklyn Theaters

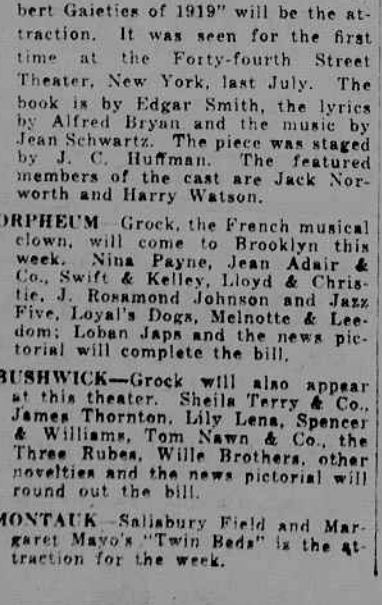
MAJESTIC—A. H. Woods will present "A Voice in the Dark," a mystery melodrama by Ralph E. Dyer, revised and elaborated by Willard Mack. The company includes Olive Wyndham, Jack Ravold, Frank Monroe, Anne Sutherland, Florine Arnold, William Boyd, Arleen Hackett, Richard Gordon and others.

SCHUBERT-CRESCENT—"The Schubert Quartet of 1919" will be the attraction. It was seen for the first time at the Forty-fourth Street Theater, New York, last July. The book is by Edgar Smith, the lyrics by Alfred Bryan and the music by Jean Schwartz. The piece was staged by J. C. Huffman. The featured members of the cast are Jack Norworth and Harry Watson.

ORPHEUM—Grock, the French musical clown, will come to Brooklyn this week. Nina Payne, Jean Adair & Co., Swift & Kelley, Lloyd & Christie, J. Rosamond Johnson and Jaxdom, Loyal's Dogs, Melnotte & Leo dom; Lohan Japs and the news pictorial will complete the bill.

BUSHWICK—Grock will also appear at this theater. Sheila Terry & Co., James Thornton, Lily Lena, Spencer & Williams, Tom Nawa & Co., the Three Rubes, Willie Brothers, other novelties and the news pictorial will round out the bill.

MONTAUK—Sallybury Field and Margaret Mayo's "Twin Beds" is the attraction for the week.



Gilda Grey



Geo. SCHILLER AS PROF. BARLOW DOING A DR. MUNYON

Ned Harrigan's Son, Will, As a Stage Reporter, Gets Points From a Real One

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teen weeks in Chicago. Out there one of the papers sent their criminal reporter to "cover" me. He said in his story that "this Joe Conway is all right, but he never would get by with the police. He is a real reporter. Think of asking the managing editor to send you 3,000 miles to cover a murder trial just because you are interested in the case."

Harrigan asked for professional criticism. In the second act, Edward H. Robins, as Kenneth Winthrop, who is shown to have committed the murder, moves toward Conway, who is obtaining the outline of the story he has obtained. Winthrop has a gun in his hand and is about to fire it at the reporter when the latter is warned by an exclamation from Mrs. Winthrop. He looks up at Winthrop and then says:

"Get down. I can't concentrate when any one looks over my shoulder."

This is one of the few lapses in Conway's part and I told Harrigan that newspaper men turn out copy in conditions where concentration seems out of the question and that men who look over a newspaperman's shoulder will not last long in a quiet study.

"That's where Conway the reporter became Harrigan the actor," he explained, agreeing with the criticism.

man, Allan Rogers, young American actor, will give a recital called "Fifteen Minutes of Concert." Henry Dexter will accompany him on the piano. A feature will be William L. Gibson and Regina Connell in Aaron Hoffman's "The Homestead." A revue, "Warren Jackson and Robert Adams are featured. The Swor brothers are down for impersonations of the Southern negro, but clown trimmings. The Old Time Darkies will revive plantation sports and the Four Danubies will do casting marvels. Gruber's Animals will entertain with imitations of human actors.

RIVERSIDE—A New Year festival will be the order for this week, with Ella Shields, the London "Ideal of Ideals," Leon Errol, Bothwell Browne holding the principal honors. Dorothy Shoemaker and company, Joe Cook, Libonati, Vera Sabina and company, the Wheeler Trio, and the news pictorial will complete the bill.

COLONIAL—A big musical extravaganza bill include three great musical comedy offerings combined in one show: Howard and Clark, "Chin Toy"; "Last Night," with Earl Cavanaugh, Walter Clinton and Julia Rooney; and four Mark Brothers, "n Everything." The supporting bill will include Walter Weems, Ford and Cunningham, the Pearson Trio, Sylvia Loyal and company, Margot, Francis and Partner, and the news pictorial.

EIGHTY-FIRST STREET—Anatol Friedland, "songland's favorite comedian," will bring his new de luxe revue, "Music Land," to B. F. Keith's Eighty-first Street this week to hold the principal honors on a brilliant bill. Cecil B. de Mille's powerful photo production, "Male and Female," will be shown. Others will

Vaudeville

PALACE—Irene Franklin will head the bill in a repertoire of new character songs. Emma Haig, the young dancer, will dance with John Waldron, late of the Argonne Players of the 77th Division. Aileen Bronson will contribute comedy in "Late Again," assisted by Margaret Hoff.

Noted as a "Shimmier"

SHUBERT-RIVIERA—George Broadhurst sends "The Crimson Alibi," which has just finished an engagement at the Broadhurst Theater. The detective is played by Harrison Hunter, while Bertha Mann is seen in the role of Mary Garrison. Others are William H. Thompson, Robert Kelly, George Graham, Robert Barry, and the "Mystery of the Burlesque," by Arthur Mayer, Ray Leavitt, William Davis,



Ernest Truex



JACK DONAHUE AS "SLOOCH" A PUNDENCE SCHOOL DETECTIVE.

Even Beauty and Brains Are Combined in Favored Girl Who Has Everything

Have you seen "Everywoman"? Now, don't say "nearly all of them," because every one says it, and of course we mean the play which was so popular a decade ago. If you don't remember so far back as that ask dad—he knows.

The play, "Everywoman," certainly brought out some beauties! Nearly every one we interviewed—present-day stars—had something to say in "Everywoman," so we weren't surprised when Miss Bennett, the Nancy of Fritz Kreisler's "Apple Blossoms," said, meditatively: "Let me see! What did I do first? Oh, of course, 'Everywoman' was a Conscience."

"And it is the only time we ever listened to the voice of conscience and found it pleasant," we interrupted.

Miss Bennett smiled in that slow, non-committal way of hers, and then she said: "Young as I was, I realized that conscience is not particularly popular and that I was going to have a time of it making myself heard."

"But you had a glorious voice. How old were you?" for Miss Bennett is now about the youngest looking prima donna we ever saw.

"I was just to be sixteen when I got the engagement and at the time I was studying and singing in the choir in Ashbury Park."

"Standing with reluctant feet?"

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